DARK HORSE COMICS
ONE-SHOT
LEONIDE THE VAMPYR
A Christmas for Crows
MIKE MIGNOLA
RACHELE ARAGNO
DAVE STEWART

LEONIDE THE VAMPYR™

A Christmas for Crows

When good and honest mountain folk come upon a small coffin in a carriage wreck, they find themselves among darker company than they bargained for. In this haunting Christmas tale, *Hellboy* creator Mike Mignola and artist extraordinaire Rachele Aragno weave a chilling holiday tale as the vampyr Leonide once again casts her spell over unsuspecting audiences.

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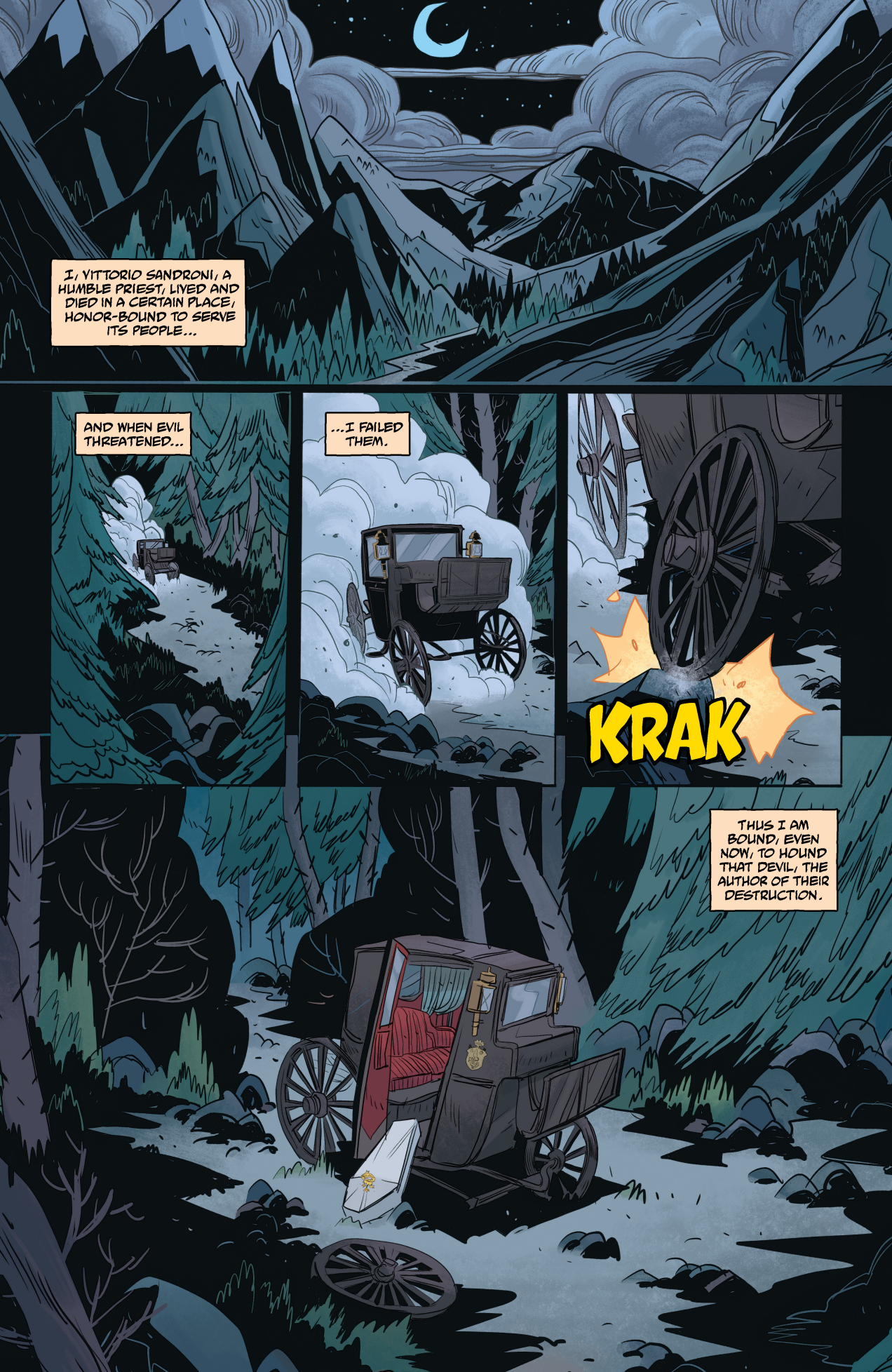
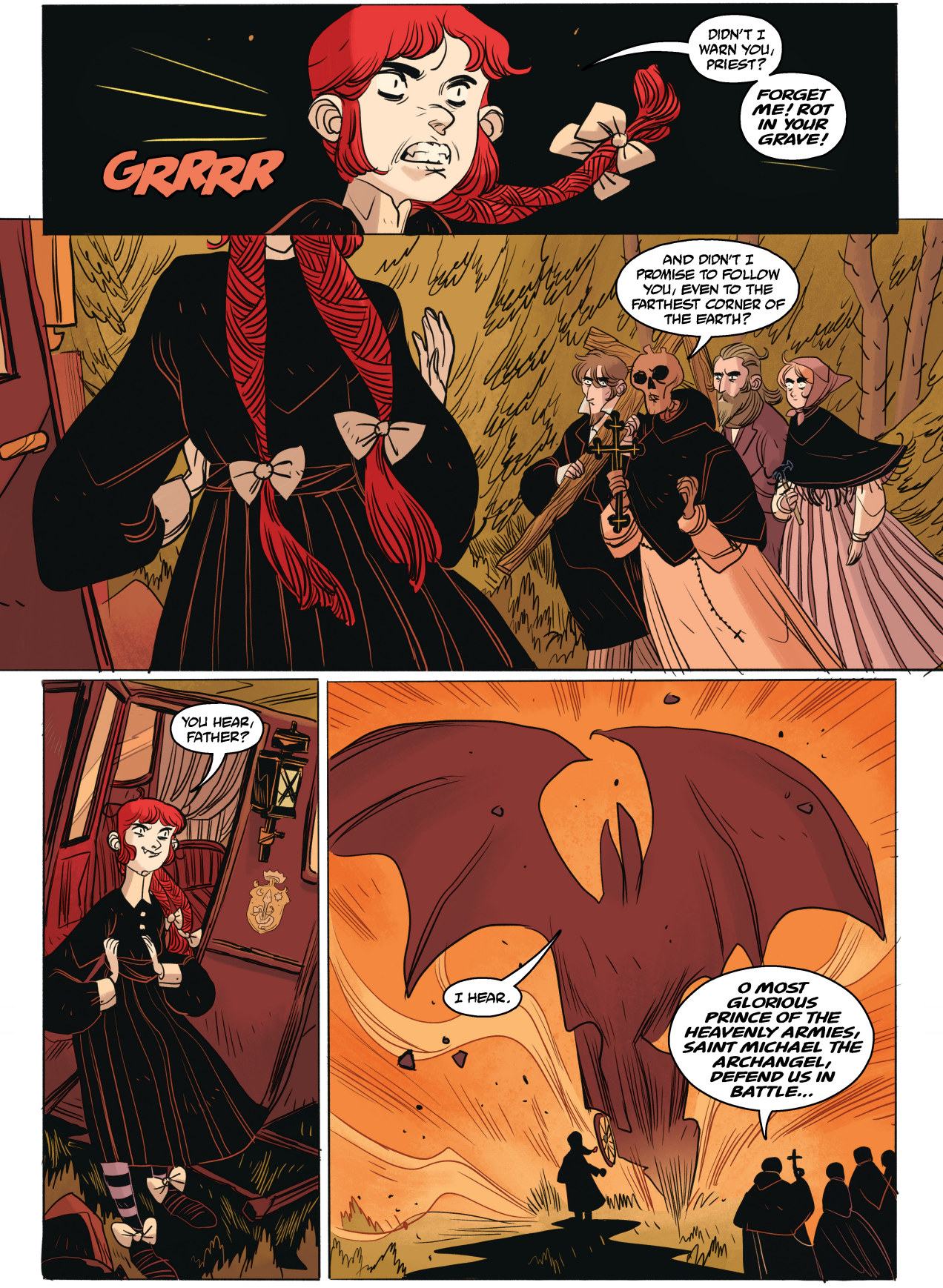

I, VITTORIO SANDRONI, A HUMBLE PRIEST, LIVED AND DIED IN A CERTAIN PLACE, HONOR-BOUND TO SERVE ITS PEOPLE...
AND WHEN EVIL THREATENED...
...I FAILED THEM.
KRAK
THUS I AM BOUND, EVEN NOW, TO HOUND THAT DEVIL, THE AUTHOR OF THEIR DESTRUCTION.

IS THAT--
A COFFIN.
BUT SO SMALL.
AND THERE-- IS THAT A NAME?
FIT ONLY FOR A CHILD.
LEONIDE.
I NEVER HEARD SUCH A NAME, AND YET...
I KNOW. I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
HUSH, YOU WOMEN.
WHOEVER THIS MAY BE, WE CANNOT LEAVE THEM LYING IN THE ROAD.

TO THE CHURCH, AND IN THE MORNING--
SEE HOW THESE HONEST FOLK, BY THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS, WOULD BRING ABOUT THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION?
DID YOU HEAR...?
YOU ARE ALL OF YOU DECIEVED!
WHAT?
KRA-KOWWW
AHH!
OH.

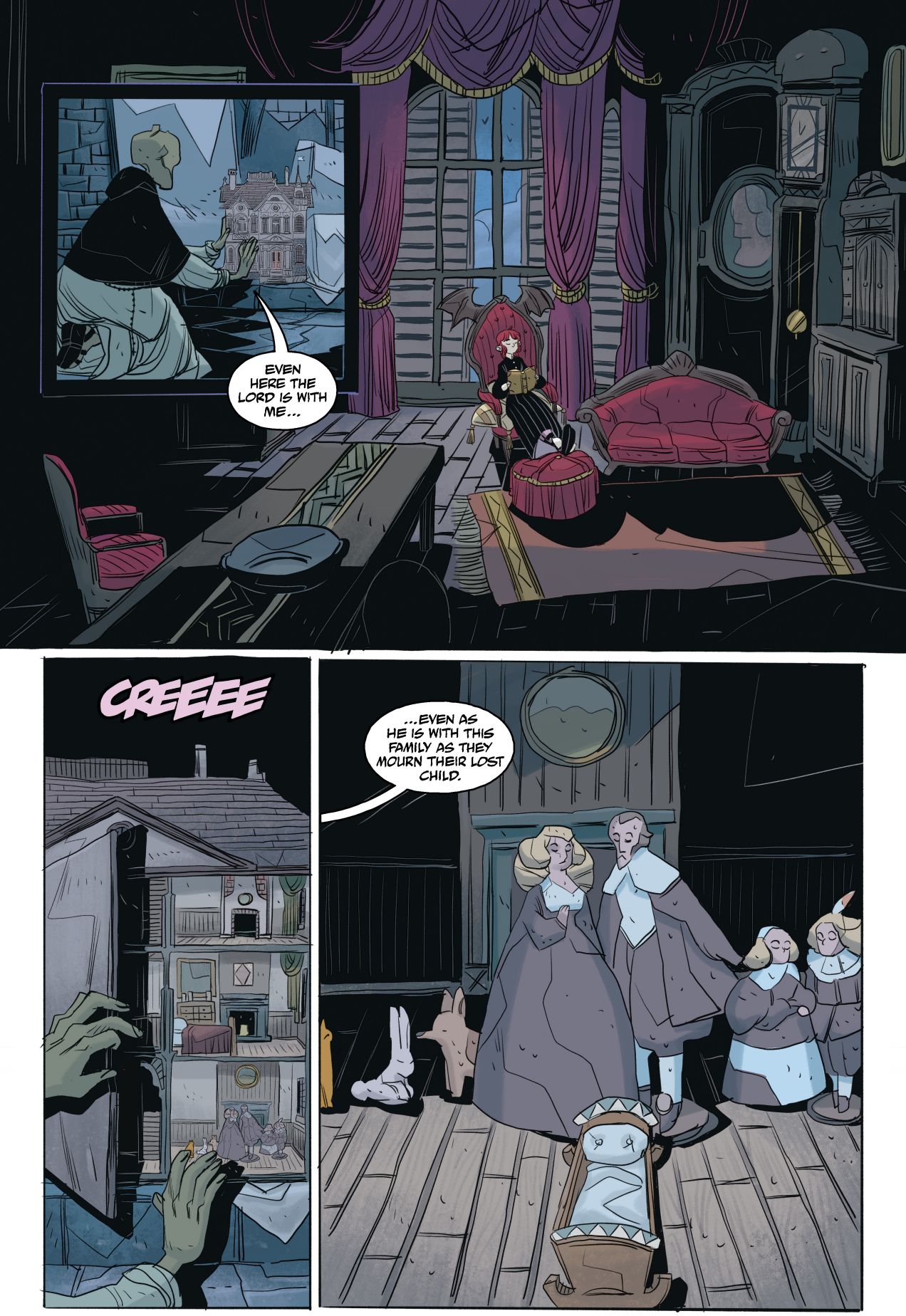
YOU POOR THING.
STEP AWAY!
AS YOU VALUE YOUR IMMORTAL SOULS, STEP AWAY!
LISTEN TO HIM.
IF ONLY WE HAD.
THE TRUTH IS THAT THE DEVIL SOMETIMES ASSUMES A PLEASING SHAPE.
OH, IT'S YOU AGAIN.
GASP!
PLEASING SHAPE--WELL, AT LEAST THANK YOU FOR THAT.
IN NŌMINE PĀTRĪS, ET FĪLII, ET SPIRĪTUS SANCTI!


GRRRR
DIDN'T I WARN YOU, PRIEST?
FORGET ME! ROT IN YOUR GRAVE!
AND DIDN'T I PROMISE TO FOLLOW YOU, EVEN TO THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE EARTH?
YOU HEAR, FATHER?
I HEAR.
O MOST GLORIOUS PRINCE OF THE HEAVENLY ARMIES, SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, DEFEND US IN BATTLE...

...IN OUR WRESTLING AGAINST THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS!
AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE WORLD OF THIS DARKNESS! AGAINST THE SPIRITS OF WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES!
KRA-KAAAM
SKREEE!
COME TO THE AID OF--
WELL, THAT WAS A SIGHT TO BEHOLD.
AND THE GIRL? WHERE--

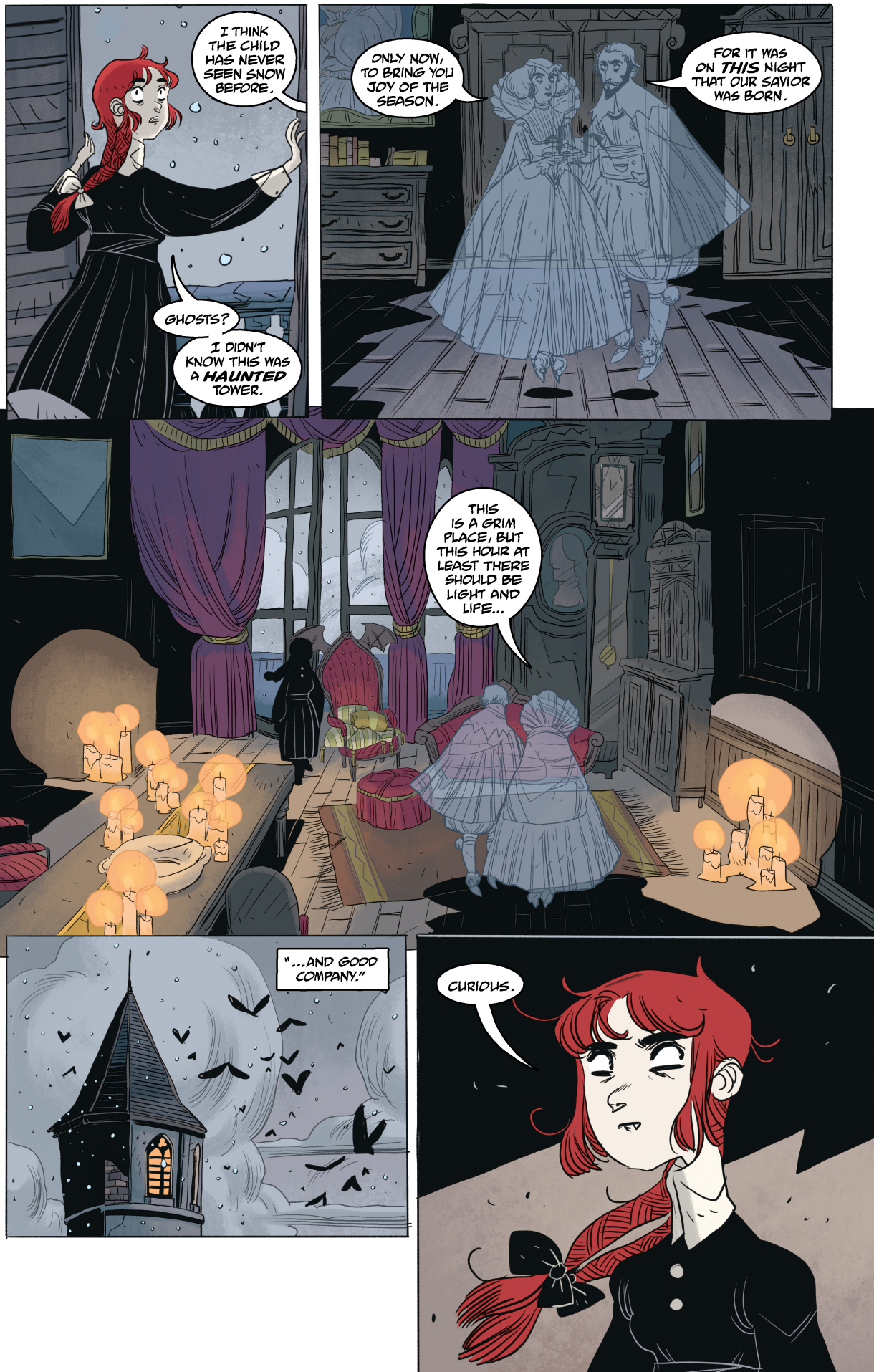
"EVEN TO THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE EARTH..."
THUD
WELL, PRIEST...?

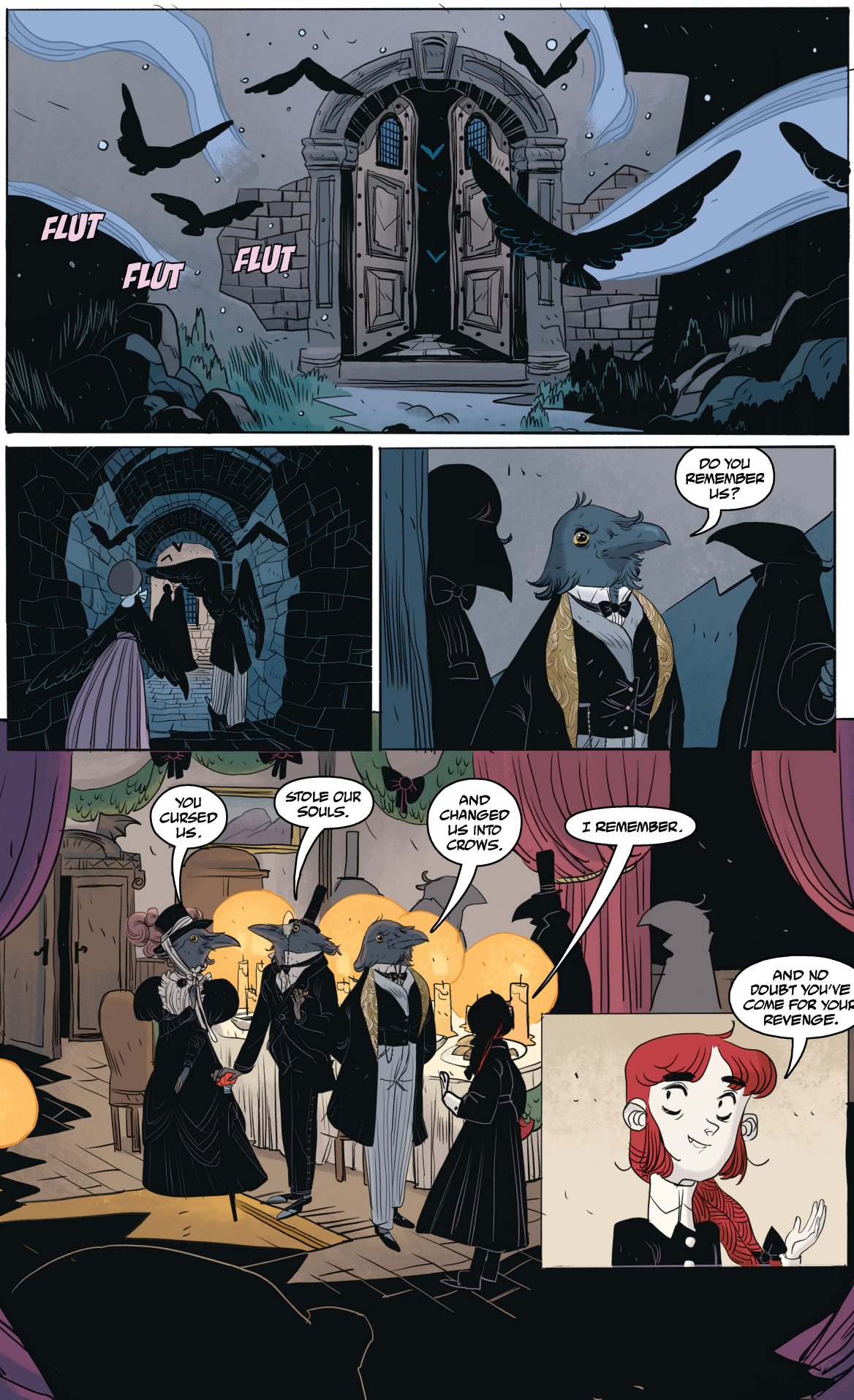
I WARNED YOU.
YOU WILL NOT REST IN YOUR OWN GRAVE? SO BE IT.
STAY HERE, SHUT AWAY FOREVER WITH ALL THE OTHER FORGOTTEN THINGS.
FORGOTTEN?
NO, DEMON...


EVEN HERE THE LORD IS WITH ME...
CREEEE
...EVEN AS HE IS WITH THIS FAMILY AS THEY MOURN THEIR LOST CHILD.

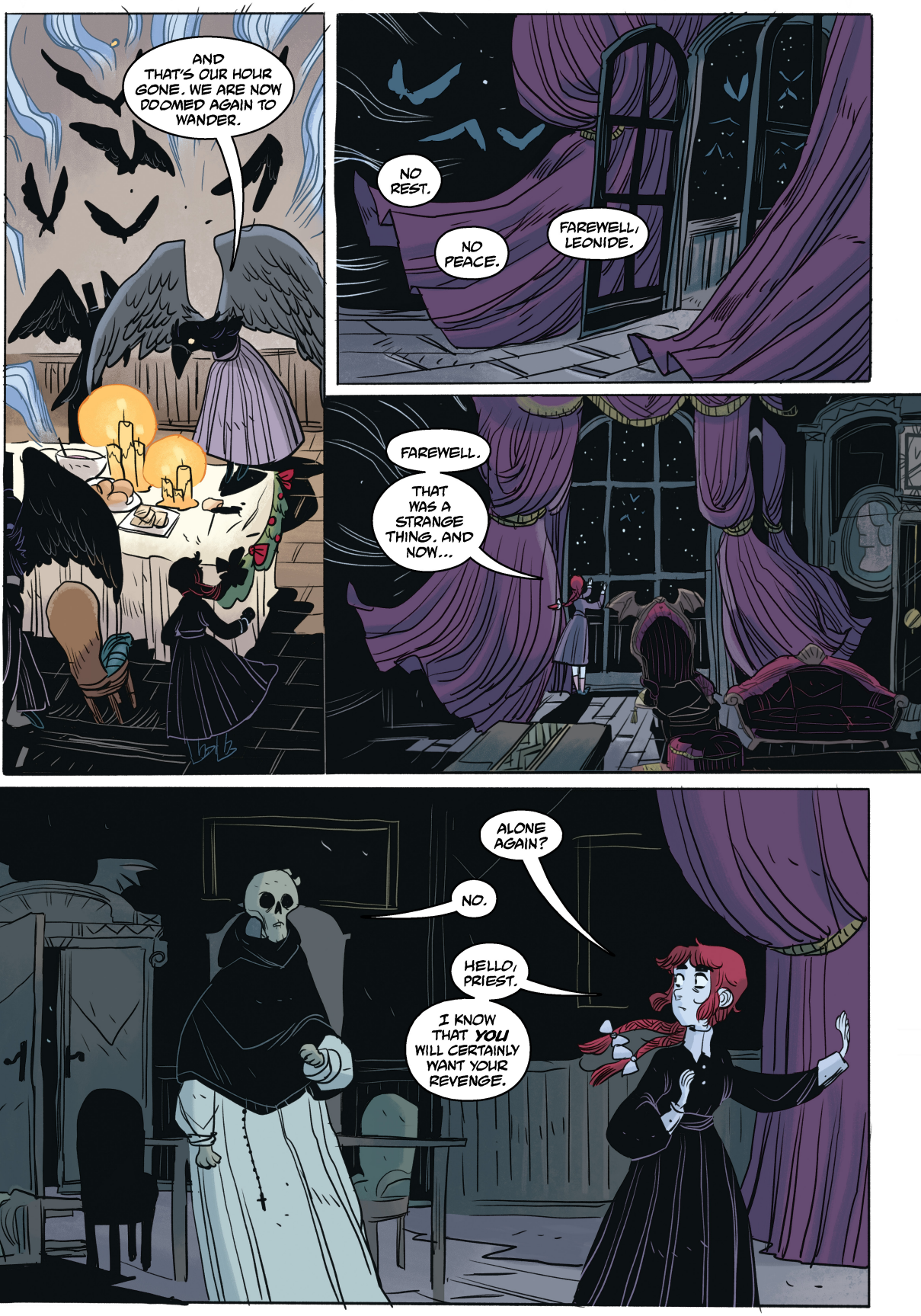
FORGIVE ME, DAUGHTER. FORGIVE...
AND JUST AT THAT MOMENT THE CREATURE DIED, FALLING AWAY TO REVEAL A HOLE IN THE ROOF OF THE TOWER, ALLOWING IN A SINGLE SHAFT OF MOONLIGHT...
WHAT'S THERE?

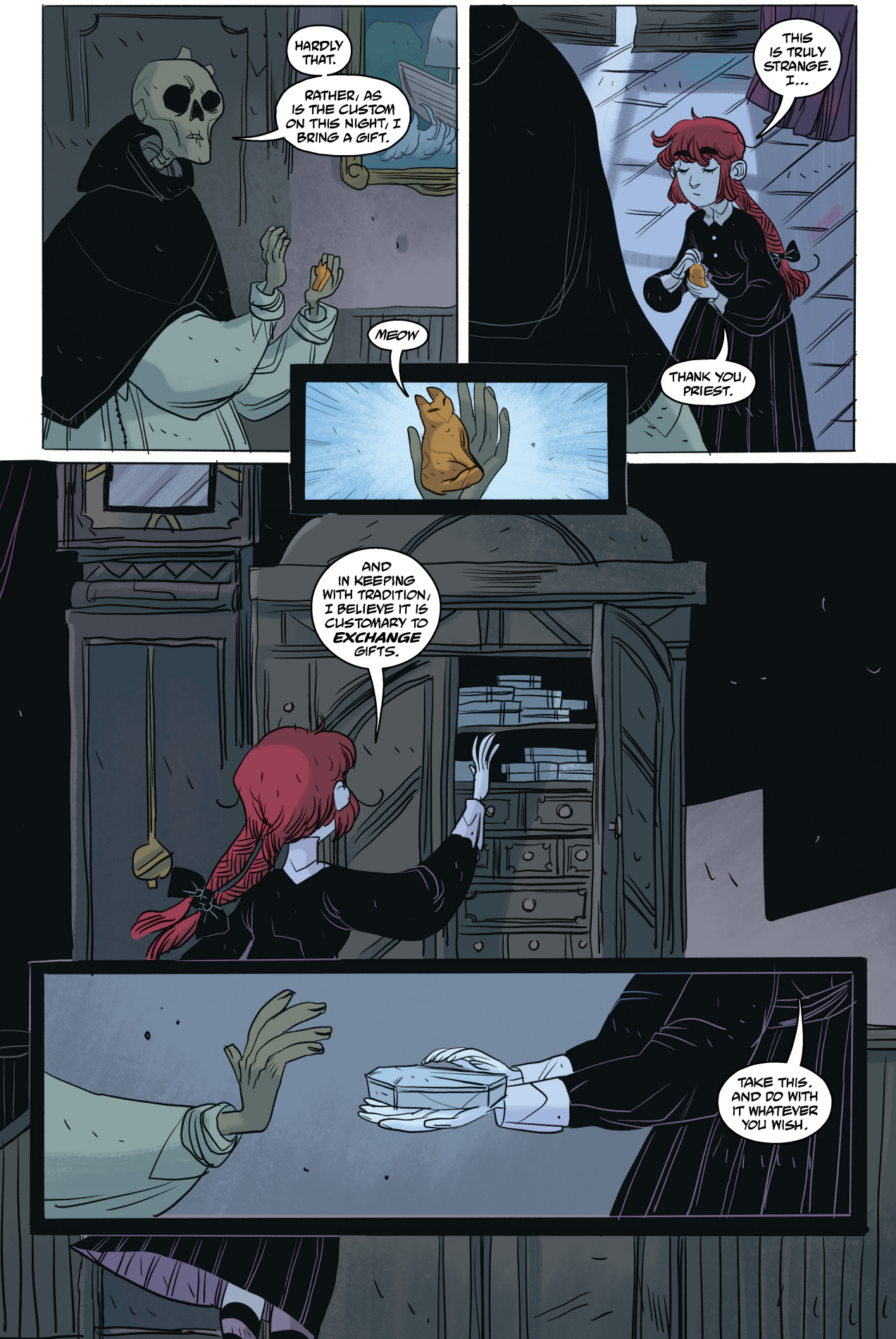
AH. THE BABE.
NOT LOST AFTER ALL.
GOOD VITTORIO, REPLACE ME IN MY CRADLE.
IT IS RIGHT AND PROPER THAT I BE WITH MY FAMILY...
"ESPECIALLY *THIS* NIGHT...
"...WHEN ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."


I THINK THE CHILD HAS NEVER SEEN SNOW BEFORE.
GHOSTS?
I DIDN'T KNOW THIS WAS A HAUNTED TOWER.
ONLY NOW, TO BRING YOU JOY OF THE SEASON.
FOR IT WAS ON THIS NIGHT THAT OUR SAVIOR WAS BORN.
THIS IS A GRIM PLACE, BUT THIS HOUR AT LEAST THERE SHOULD BE LIGHT AND LIFE...
"...AND GOOD COMPANY."
CURIOUS.


FLUT
FLUT
FLUT
DO YOU REMEMBER US?
YOU CURSED US.
STOLE OUR SOULS.
AND CHANGED US INTO CROWS.
I REMEMBER.
AND NO DOUBT YOU'VE COME FOR YOUR REVENGE.

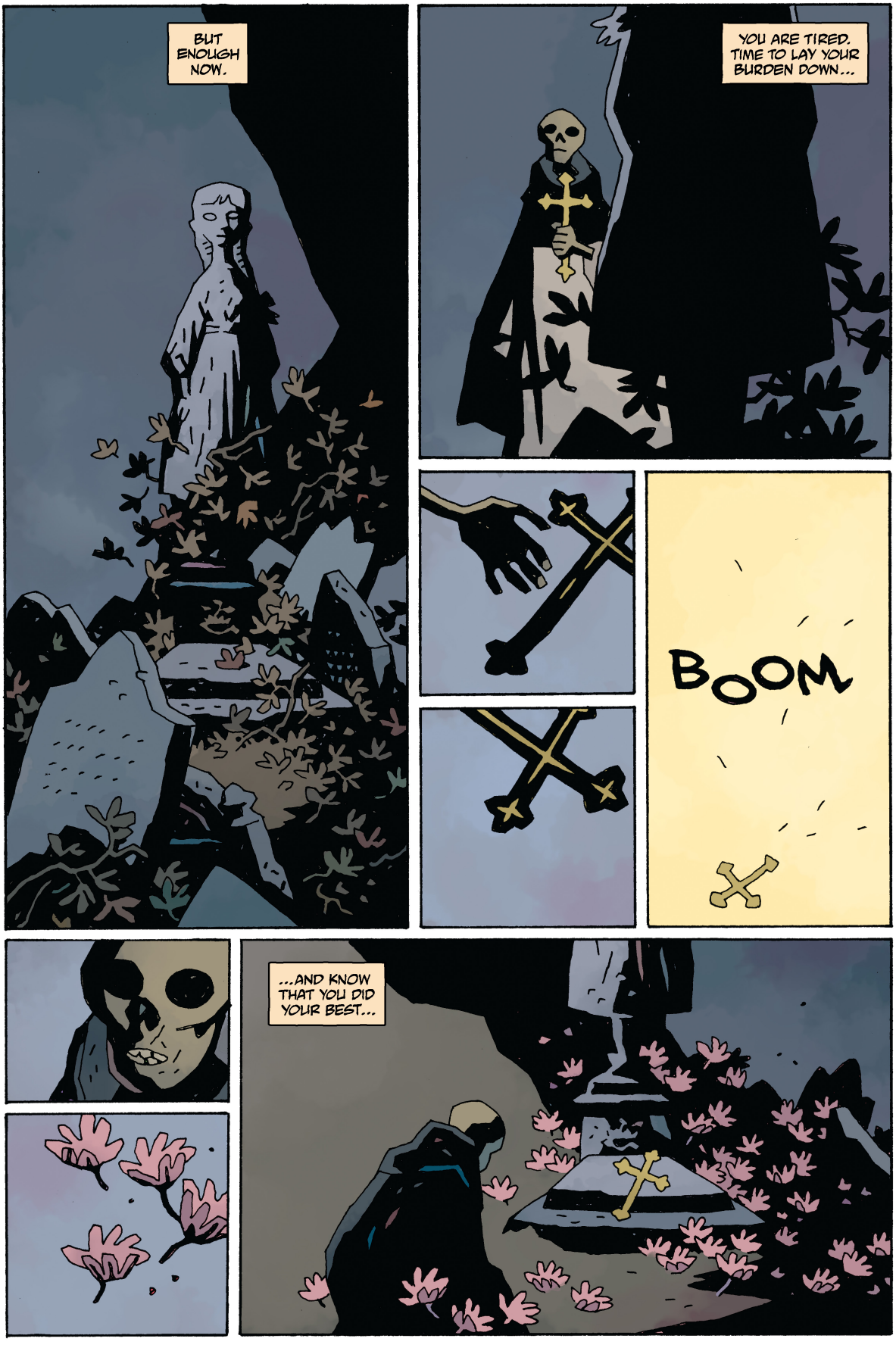
NO.
WE'VE COME TO FORGIVE YOU.
THE LORD BLESS US, ONE AND ALL.
MERRY CHRISTMAS.
TIC
TIC
BONG


AND THAT'S OUR HOUR GONE. WE ARE NOW DOOMED AGAIN TO WANDER.
NO REST.
NO PEACE.
FAREWELL, LEONIDE.
FAREWELL.
THAT WAS A STRANGE THING. AND NOW...
ALONE AGAIN?
NO.
HELLO, PRIEST.
I KNOW THAT YOU WILL CERTAINLY WANT YOUR REVENGE.


HARDLY THAT.
RATHER, AS IS THE CUSTOM ON THIS NIGHT, I BRING A GIFT.
MEOW
THIS IS TRULY STRANGE. I...
THANK YOU, PRIEST.
AND IN KEEPING WITH TRADITION, I BELIEVE IT IS CUSTOMARY TO EXCHANGE GIFTS.
TAKE THIS. AND DO WITH IT WHATEVER YOU WISH.

IT IS A FINE GIFT.
THANK YOU.
GOODBYE.
AND SO THOSE FEW SOULS STOLEN WERE SET FREE AGAIN. WHAT BECAME OF THEM... WHO CAN SAY?
THE END

EPILOGUE
VITTORIO SANDRONI, YOU HAVE LABORED LONG AND HARD. YOU HAVE SERVED THE CAUSE OF MAN ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE...
...AND AFTER.
YOU WILL BE REVERED FOR IT.
YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED.


BUT ENOUGH NOW.
YOU ARE TIRED. TIME TO LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN...
BOOM
...AND KNOW THAT YOU DID YOUR BEST...

...BUT SOME THINGS ARE BEYOND THE WORKINGS AND THE KNOWINGS OF MAN.
KRAK
THE END